

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The unique history of Chinese in Cuba

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U.S. gov't makes new threats against Iran

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Washington is making new threats to pressure Iran to abandon its development of nuclear power. The imperialist campaign came as divisions widened among the Iranian rulers and armed forces with the resumption of protests for democratic rights.

U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton, speaking in Bangkok July 22, said, “We want Iran to calculate what I think is a fair assessment, that if the United States extends a defense umbrella over the region” the Iranian government “won’t be able to intimidate and dominate, as they apparently believe they can, once they have a nuclear weapon.”

Washington has charged that Iran’s nuclear power program is aimed at producing weapons. Tehran denies this,

saying the program is needed to develop the country’s infrastructure.

“Mrs. Clinton’s invocation of a defense umbrella is reminiscent of the so-called umbrella that Washington extends to its Asian allies: implicitly, the promise of an American reprisal if they are attacked by nuclear weapons,” the *New York Times* said July 23.

In Israel, intelligence and atomic power minister Dan Meridor told army radio, “I was not thrilled to hear the American statement from yesterday that they will protect their allies with a nuclear umbrella, as if they have already come to terms with a nuclear Iran.”

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates flew to Israel shortly afterward and held a news conference in Jerusalem July 27

with Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak. Referring to a military strike against Iran, Barak said, “We clearly believe that no options should be removed from the table. This is our policy. We mean it. We recommend others to take the same position.”

“I think we’re in full agreement [with Tel Aviv] on the negative

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Nuclear reactor in southwest Iran under construction in 2003. Washington and its allies oppose Iran’s development of nuclear technology, which Tehran says it needs to provide power.

Two are indicted in FBI ‘terror’ probe of Somalis in U.S. cities

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS—The first indictments in connection with an FBI counterterrorism investigation of Somali communities in Minneapolis, Seattle, and other U.S. cities were made public July 13. Five months earlier a federal grand jury had indicted Salah Osman Ahmed of Minneapolis and Abdifatah Yusuf Isse of Seattle on charges of “providing material support to terrorists” and “conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim or injure” people in foreign countries.

As part of the massive ongoing investigation, FBI agents in Minneapolis have approached numerous Somalis on the street, in their homes, at a mosque, and on the University of Minnesota campus.

The FBI claims that more than 20 Somali youth living in Minneapolis have gone to Somalia to fight with al-Shabab, an armed Islamist group that Washington alleges has growing ties to al-Qaeda. Al-Shabab fought to overthrow the Somali government in Mogadishu that came out of a U.S.-backed invasion of the country by thousands of Ethiopian troops in 2006. That government was replaced following UN-brokered elections ear-

lier this year. The group is currently fighting against the new government, which has the support of the main imperialist powers, including Washington, and is backed by thousands of African Union troops.

In February, FBI Director Robert Mueller claimed that the Somali youth were “radicalized” by people in two mosques in Minneapolis and St. Paul. According to news reports, they are the central targets of the investigation.

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Washington mulls new approach to ‘interrogations’ of war prisoners

BY BEN JOYCE

The U.S. government is considering devising new interrogation methods for those detained in its “war on terror.” The shift comes as Washington attempts to clean up its image marked by infamous torture camps at the U.S. Navy base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba; the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan; and others.

The proposal comes as prisoners at Bagram continue a protest against violations of their rights. Since at

As joblessness rises, benefits harder to get



AP Photo/M. Spencer Green

Workers line up at Social Security Administration booth at job fair in Oak Brook, Illinois, July 2. The number officially unemployed for more than 27 months has risen 170 percent in last year.

BY DOUG NELSON

The rising number of workers who depend on unemployment insurance to meet basic and immediate necessities face increasing delays and mounting red tape from government bureaucracies.

The official unemployment rate has doubled over the last year and a half and now stands at 9.5 percent. The real

figure is closer to 11 percent if you include workers who are not counted in government figures because, although they have looked for work over the last year, they have not looked for work in the last month. They are labeled “marginally attached” to the workforce.

About 9.5 million workers receive unemployment compensation out of

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Conference discusses Chinese legacy in New Zealand, world

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Some 320 people took part in a July 17–19 international conference here that explored the history of Chinese-New Zealanders and the Chinese diaspora around the globe over the last two centuries. The majority of participants were New Zealand citizens of Chinese heritage, joined by many other residents of New Zealand and individuals from other countries.

The Auckland branch of the Chinese Association of New Zealand organized the conference, along with the International Society for the

Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO), an association of individuals engaged in research and teaching on Chinese overseas in countries throughout the world.

Almost half the 70 speakers at the conference were from countries other than New Zealand. Most came from Asia, with others from the Americas, Australia, Europe, and Russia.

Several plenary talks in a large lecture hall at the University of Auckland business school focused on the stories of Chinese-New Zealanders who are involved in business, the arts, and sports. Other plenary talks discussed the changing patterns of Chinese im-

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July 26 event celebrates Cuban Revolution in N.Y.

BY DOUG NELSON

NEW YORK—About 140 people attended a meeting here July 25 at the Service Employees International Union Local 1199 hall to celebrate 50 years of the Cuban Revolution, on the eve of the 56th anniversary of the opening salvo in the revolutionary armed struggle led by Fidel Castro.

On July 26, 1953, some 160 revolutionaries under Castro’s command launched an attack on two army garrisons in eastern Cuba. While the attacks failed, and more than 50 of the captured revolutionaries were killed, the action marked the beginning of a popular armed struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

The revolutionary organization led by Castro, which five and a half years later led the victorious popular insurrection against the Batista tyranny, took its name from that date—the July 26 Movement.

The meeting was chaired by Nancy Cabrero, president of Casa de las Américas, and Frank Velgara, of Pro Libertad, a group that campaigns for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners in the United States. Casa de las Américas, originally called Casa Cuba, was founded in 1957 by members of the New York chapter of the July 26 Movement to win support for the revolutionary struggle in Cuba.

The featured speakers were Anet Pino, chargé d’affaires of the Cuban Mission to the United Nations, and Leonard Weinglass, an attorney for five Cuban revolutionaries who have been held in U.S. jails for nearly 11

years. Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, René González, and Antonio Guerrero, internationally known as the Cuban Five, were framed up and convicted by the U.S. government in 2001 on false charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage.” They are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to life.

Last month the Supreme Court declined to review the case, Weinglass explained, despite unprecedented condemnation of the conviction and sentences. Among those who have condemned the trials, he said, are 10 Nobel Prize winners and the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

The next steps in the legal defense of the five, Weinglass said, includes a resentencing trial in mid-October, which will remove life sentences for Labañino and Guerrero, and new legal arguments on behalf of Hernández, who is serving two life sentences. A three-judge panel of a federal appeals court ruled in June 2008 that the life sentences for Labañino and Guerrero were excessive.

“We have found out recently that some reporters in Miami who wrote scurrilous attacks against the five prior to and throughout their trial were on the payroll of the United States government,” Weinglass said. “That has not been revealed before. I can tell you we have proof of that fact, and we will be arguing that as well.”

The young revolutionaries led by Castro who carried out the heroic assault on July 26, 1953, Pino said, referred to themselves as the “Cen-

Mass rallies in Cuba celebrate July 26



AFP/Getty Images/Adalberto Roque

July 26—More than 200,000 workers, farmers, students, and others participated in a rally in the eastern province of Holguín to mark the 56th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks in eastern Cuba.

“Throughout the entire country, the capacity for resistance, organization, and solidarity of the Cuban people has been demonstrated” in these difficult months and hard work, said Cuban president Raúl Castro in his address to the crowd. He was referring to the mobilizations by working people in Cuba to confront the destruction left by the three devastating hurricanes that hit the country last year.

The Cuban president highlighted the reconstruction efforts so far, and other challenges facing the Cuban people.

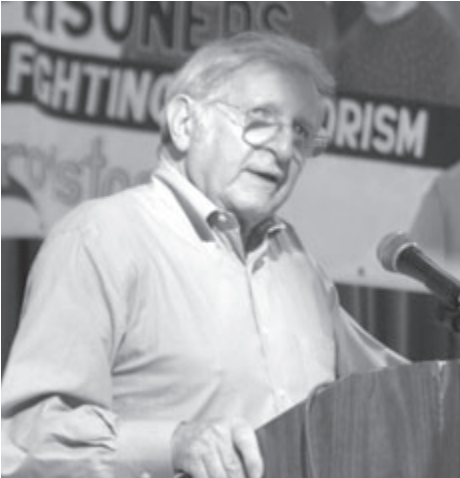
Rallies to mark this historic event were also held throughout the island. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

—RÓGER CALERO

ennial Generation” in recognition of their revolutionary continuity with the legacy of José Martí, who was born in 1853 and led Cuba’s war for independence against Spain. These revolutionaries left “a generation determined to eliminate the injustice of this world, and willing to die if neces-

sary,” she said.

Pino stressed the importance of unity in action among forces that support the Cuban Revolution and the Cuban Five. This unity must be as “compact as the veins of silver that lie at the roots of the Andes,” she said, quoting from Martí’s “Our America.”



Militant photos by Robin Mace

Featured speakers at New York July 26 celebration. At left is Leonard Weinglass, a lawyer for Cuban Five. At right is Anet Pino, chargé d’affaires at Cuban Mission to United Nations.

THE MILITANT

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Managing Editor: Martín Koppel

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Editorial volunteers: Tom Baumann, Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Seth Galinsky, Cindy Jaquith, Ben Joyce, Omari Musa, Doug Nelson, Jacob Perasso

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Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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U.S. prisoners given life sentences at all-time high

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

More persons in federal and state prisons in the United States are serving life terms than ever before, according to “No Exit,” a recent report issued by the Sentencing Project, a private research and policy group.

There are more than 2.3 million people locked up in U.S. prisons and jails—the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Of those in federal and state prisons, 140,610—nearly 10 percent—face life sentences. This figure has more than quadrupled over the past 25 years. Nearly 30 percent of prisoners with life sentences—about 41,000—are permanently denied parole hearings, tripling since 1992.

The rising number of life sentences is not the result of “higher crime rates,” the Sentencing Project notes, but of “policy changes that have imposed harsher punishments and restricted parole consideration.”

In five states—Alabama, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, and New York—at least one in six prisoners are serving life sentences. In California, which has the nation’s largest prison population of 171,000 as of the end of 2008, 20 percent face life imprisonment. A few months ago federal judges tentatively ordered California officials to release tens of thousands of inmates because of severe overcrowding.

The federal penitentiary system and that of six other states—Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota—do not allow prisoners serving life terms to apply for parole.

Blacks, who comprise 13.5 percent of the U.S. population, are 37.5 percent of those in prisons nationwide and make up nearly half of inmates imprisoned for life. In New York State 82 percent of those with life sentences are Black or Latino.

The United States is the only country in the world that imposes a sentence of life without parole upon juveniles, according to the report. About 6,800 juveniles in the state and the

federal systems face life sentences. One-quarter have no possibility of parole. The Sentencing Project, citing a 2005 Human Rights Watch report, said that 59 percent of juveniles sentenced to life without parole were “first-time offenders.” In 26 percent of these cases the youth were not “the primary assailant” but “only minimally involved in the crime.” However, under state laws they were given a life sentence without parole.

So-called three strike laws have been used to dish out life sentences to working people. The law applies to individuals with two previous felony convictions of a “serious” or violent nature. In California a third conviction for any felony results in a mandatory 25 years to life sentence.

For example, Ali Foroutan is serving a life sentence in California after



Overcrowded conditions at California State Prison in Los Angeles, August 2006. California has nation’s largest prison population, with 20 percent facing life.

being convicted in 2000 of possession of 0.03 grams of methamphetamine, a prescription drug sometimes used as a stimulant. He had two prior felony burglary charges on his record, none

of which involved any violence, said the report.

Among the “third strikes” for which 55 people are serving time in California is “driving under the influence.”

Unemployed face long delays in benefits

Continued from front page

some 17 million jobless (including 2.2 million “marginally attached”). Applicants must prove, often contrary to employer claims, that they were laid off “through no fault of their own” and are looking for work.

Unemployment covers only a fraction of previous wages. In Texas, for example, the maximum paid is \$392 per week, about what someone making \$750 a week for the last year would receive. For most workers payments are a lot less.

Benefits are running out for a growing number of the 9.5 million eligible to receive them. Workers counted as jobless for more than 27 months has risen 170 percent in the last year and now stands at 4.4 million.

In most states, eligible workers can receive an initial maximum of 26 weeks of compensation, depending on how long they have worked. Beyond 26 weeks, workers must apply for an extension and more start dropping off the rolls.

Last year Congress voted to provide extensions of 20–33 weeks, depending on each state’s unemployment level. Recently Congress added provisions that allow workers to apply for an additional 13–20 week extension in most states. However, among other restrictions, applicants must provide proof satisfying Labor Department bureaucrats that they have applied and been turned down for lower paying jobs.

Ironically, state governments say they don’t have enough workers to handle the rising applications for unemployment benefits, resulting in long delays.

About a quarter of applicants are scrutinized by a case investigator, which further slows down the decision process. Over the last year only 61 percent of applications in the country were processed within three weeks. More than 850,000 took longer than eight weeks.

In California, where unemployment is officially 11.6 percent, only 5 percent of appeals are decided within a month.

“It is extremely stressful when you don’t know how you are going to support your family,” Mr. Coronel, a

janitor from San Francisco, told the *New York Times*. He finally received a check after six months: two days of persistently trying to get through to the unemployment office to file an application, one month to learn he was turned down, three months for an initial response to his appeal, and another two months before receiving approval.

Increasing delays such as these are one of the factors swelling the ranks of the homeless across the country.

Funds gathered from employer taxes and earmarked for unemployment benefits have run out in 16 states so far. These states have been paying unemployment from money loaned by the federal government. Other states are soon to be doing the same.

In mid-July, Texas requested \$643 million in loans from the U.S. Labor

Department to pay unemployment through October 1. Citing technical problems, one Texas official said that on July 13, more than 155,000 callers could not get through to anyone at any of the state’s four unemployment offices.

Texas Workforce Commission spokeswoman Ann Hatchitt initially said due to “complex federal requirements” those slated for a 13-week extension approved by Congress July 1—about 100,000 workers—would need to wait “a couple of months” to get paid. An internal e-mail estimated the payments would be sent in November.

Tom Pauken, commission chairman, later said the department would sort out whatever is responsible for the long delays by the end of the month.

N.Y. students protest child-care cuts

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK—Dozens rallied in front of Hunter College July 22 protesting the administration’s plans to eliminate 25 percent of the space used by the Children’s Learning Center (CLC) on campus. The center provides affordable child care for graduate students and undergraduates attending the school. Hunter plans to convert one of the four classrooms used by CLC into administrative space.

“I heard about this protest on Facebook and thought I should come show support,” said Mariya Yefremova, president of the Political Science Association and a member of the Women’s Rights Coalition. “Hunter Col-

lege is great, but this is like a slap in the face.”

College officials justify the cuts by saying that the space is underutilized. The current child-care capacity of the center is 68 children. The 25 percent cut brings the capacity down to the fall 2008 enrollment.

Protesters countered the officials’ claims, explaining that the center’s availability to students who need its services has not been adequately promoted. As of July 22 information on the CLC was not readily available to view on the college’s Web site.

“I didn’t even know we had child care available here!” said one campus worker who walked by the protest.

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CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

Berkeley
Art Exhibit Opening: Original Paintings by Antonio Guerrero, One of the Cuban Five Political Prisoners Held in the U.S. Keynote speaker: Alice Walker, novelist and poet. Thurs. Aug. 6, 7:30 p.m. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave. Organized by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. For more information: www.thecuban5.org

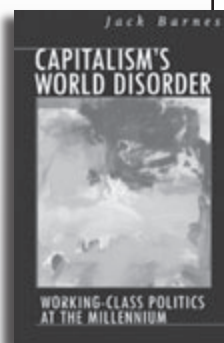
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UK rulers to review war strategy, Washington ties

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—British prime minister Gordon Brown’s Labour Party government has announced it will prepare a “Green Paper”—a Strategic Defence Review—for discussion early next year. It will be the first such review since 1998. Decisions won’t be taken until after the general election, which must be held by June 2010. The opposition Conservative Party leadership has said it would conduct a review if elected.

The announcement comes amid a major public debate about the war in Afghanistan. A host of opposition politicians, retired military officers, and media commentators have questioned Britain’s eight-year-long presence in Afghanistan. They say that there is no strategic end game and that British forces are under equipped for the role—having too few helicopters for cover, for instance.

Echoing this view, Lindsey German, convener of the Stop the War Coalition and a leader of Britain’s left-wing political organization the Socialist Workers Party, told BBC Radio 4’s *PM* program: “We’re doing the troops who are there and the rest of the people of this country a disservice to pretend that if only we sent a few more troops or if only we sent a few more helicopters or if only we had better equipment, then somehow we would be winning this war. We are not winning this war.” At stake is a wider concern among the major bourgeois political and military leaders about the UK’s role in the world and the armed forces required.

Gen. David Richards, incoming army chief, says there are two contending visions: “fortress Britain,” that is preparation for a conventional all-out war; and “asymmetric” warfare, such as is being carried out in Iraq and Afghanistan. He, along with current army chief Gen. Richard Dannatt favor the latter, and reject spending on new aircraft carriers and fighter jets.

Calls for defense spending cuts

A report recently published by the Institute for Public Policy Research called for cuts of £24 billion (US\$39 billion) in the defense budget, including getting rid of the Trident nuclear missile submarine program, an end to reliance on the United States, and for greater cooperation with European countries.

The report was significant as one of its authors, George Robertson, was former NATO general secretary and as secretary of state for defense under the Anthony Blair government oversaw the last Strategic Defence Review.

The Blair government had continued the “special relationship” with Washington pursued by the Margaret Thatcher administration. This had allowed Britain to “punch above its weight,” according to Thatcher’s foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd.

The 1998 review outlined an interventionist foreign policy in which Britain should be capable of fighting one large war, involving a division (about 30,000 troops) or simultaneously two medium-sized wars involving a brigade (around 4,500 troops).

The Blair government committed 40,000 troops to the invasion of Iraq.

But the political will for continuing this course, and the increase in military spending it implies, has eroded at a time when, in the context of economic depression, Britain’s rulers are preparing to attack living standards with cuts in health care, education, unemployment benefits, and other spending that make up the social wage.

The army is way under strength. Most infantry battalions are 10 percent to 20 percent short of required numbers, and as much as 40 percent if those deemed unfit to deploy (because of injury) are factored out.

The United Kingdom currently spends £38 billion (US\$63 billion) on defense, 2.2 percent of its gross domestic product, compared to 4 percent by the United States, which has a much larger economy.

In Iraq, British forces in Basra withdrew from the city center and stood by and watched as Iraqi government forces launched an assault on the Shiite militias with which the British military had cut deals. In Afghanistan, the British forces in 2006



British troops in southern Afghanistan ride in armored personnel vehicle during Operation Panther’s Claw July 19. Ruling class in Britain is reviewing its strategy in the Afghan war and its special relationship with U.S. imperialism.

abandoned Musa Qala despite Washington’s protests and handed it over to tribal leaders. The U.S. military stepped in to take the town back the following year. And when U.S. president Barack Obama requested more troops for the Afghan-Pakistan campaign, the Brown government—in a move supported by the Conservative opposition—refused.

Former U.S. army vice chief of staff

Jack Keane says that the special relationship with Britain has “frayed” as a result of such developments.

The trend does face opposition. Last week, the UK National Defence Association, a campaign group made up of former senior figures in the Armed Forces and the government, published a report calling for a rise in defense spending and protection of the special relationship.

China: workers protest steel plant privatization

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of Chinese workers protested July 23 against a planned privatization of the Tonghua Iron & Steel state-run steel plant in Jilin province in northeast China.

The widening social inequalities caused by the proliferation of capitalist methods in China, in the midst of a worldwide capitalist crisis, is generating tensions between toilers in city and countryside on the one hand and ruling petty-bourgeois layers on the other.

A group of 3,000 angry workers gathered in the company’s office building that morning after learning that the workforce at the steel plant would be cut to 5,000 from about 30,000 as a result of the privatization.

The protest then turned violent, according to China’s Xinhua news agency, as the workers rushed into the factory to stop production. Chen Guojun, a manager from Beijing-based Jianlong Group who had been sent to oversee the privatization, was injured and then beaten by a small number of workers who found him hiding. Trapped by workers blocking the roads on factory grounds and fighting thousands of riot cops with bricks, Chen was not taken to a hospital until later that evening, where he died.

The protest led to a halt in production at all of the factory’s seven furnaces, reported Xinhua. The privatization plans have been shelved.

The takeover of Tonghua Iron & Steel by the privately held Jianlong Group, one of China’s largest private steel companies, has been years in the making. In 2005, Jianlong bought a 36 percent stake of Tonghua as part of privatization of the provincial government-owned company. Following Tonghua’s posting of a \$6.3 million profit in June, Jianlong made a bid to become the majority shareholder.

“The plan on a payroll cut disillusioned the workers as many of them expected the factory would work out of a financial plight, because the price of

steel continues to rise,” said Xinhua.

Steel companies and speculators have sought increased profits as the demand for steel in China shot up propelled by a “stimulus package” launched by the Chinese government earlier this year.

At the same time, the Chinese government is in the midst of restructuring the country’s steel industry in order to run them “more efficiently,” which includes massive layoffs.

Similar moves are being taken in other sectors, throwing millions of workers onto the streets. A large percentage of them are “migrant workers” from the

countryside who have swelled the size of China’s working class.

The growing social inequalities, unsafe working conditions, attacks on gains made by toilers after the landlords and capitalists were swept out of political power in 1949 (like selling off collective land and state enterprises), corruption, and discrimination against national minorities are all fueling protests by Chinese workers and peasants.

In 2005, the last year the Chinese government released statistics on “sudden mass incidents,” 87,000 of these protests took place across the country.

‘Interrogations’ of war prisoners

Continued from front page

Pakistan, and Iraq.

Some 21,000 troops have been ordered to Afghanistan so far this year, and the Pentagon says its goal is to have 68,000 there by the end of 2009.

The White House is considering creating an interrogation team that may include some two dozen people from the FBI, CIA, and other agencies who will come up with new “noncoercive” tactics for collecting intelligence.

An article in the July 18 *Wall Street Journal* said that some CIA veterans oppose limiting interrogation tactics to “noncoercive” methods because there is a “middle ground” between torture and official guidelines.

“We have to figure out tactic by tactic: Would we allow some things that go beyond the criminal justice system or the Army Field Manual?” former CIA lawyer and federal prosecutor John Radsan told the *Journal*.

According to the July 16 *Washington Post*, the prisoners at Bagram Air Base are protesting their indefinite, arbitrary incarceration. The Obama administration has insisted that prisoners from around the world being held at Bagram can be jailed indefinitely

without charges and have no right to challenge their detention. None of the prisoners are permitted to visit with their lawyers.

The administration is fighting an April ruling by a U.S. federal district court that stated that habeas corpus rights afforded by the Supreme Court to Guantánamo detainees should also apply to non-Afghan prisoners at Bagram who were detained outside of Afghanistan. Nearly 40 prisoners at Bagram are not Afghan citizens, and many of them were not arrested in Afghanistan.

The facility at Bagram currently holds some 620 prisoners, but Washington has plans to expand the facility to hold nearly 1,000.

In January Obama issued an executive order to close the Guantánamo facility by the end of 2009. However, the Senate in a 90-6 vote May 20 rejected the president’s request for \$80 million to close the prison camp.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported July 21 that the administration said it would not meet self-imposed deadlines for deciding what to do with many of the 240 prisoners still jailed at Guantánamo, claiming many are “too dangerous” for release.

UK: Pakistani students fight ‘terrorism’ arrests

BY ALEX XEZONAKIS

LONDON—More than 100 people met at the School of Oriental and African Studies here July 2 as part of the campaign to free 10 Pakistani students fighting moves by the British government to deport them on grounds of “national security” and “visa irregularities.”

Along with two others, the students, known as the North West 10, were arrested in high-profile “antiterror” raids across northwest England in April. They have been detained without charges ever since.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown claimed the police operation had foiled a “major terrorist plot.”

One of the students was arrested at gunpoint outside Liverpool John Moores University library. Journalism student Daniel Taylor said, “I saw a man on the floor. Police were shouting at him and one of the officers had what looked like a machine gun pointed right into his head,” reported the BBC.

Of the 12 arrested, Tariq Rehman agreed to return to Pakistan if the allegations against him were dropped. Another, a British national, was released without charge.

The 10 have each been denied bail by the Special Immigration Appeals Commission. The commission hears “evidence” in secret with a government-appointed advocate representing the accused. Defendants and their lawyers are excluded from proceedings and not informed of charges against them.

The men have been held in category-A detention, been strip-searched, and denied any books to continue their studies.

Stephanie Harrison, one of the defense lawyers, told the commission, “Not a single piece of actual physical evidence has been produced.”

Eight of the men were allegedly enrolled at a “bogus” college in Manchester, according to press reports. The London *Telegraph* stated that such universities “let in hundreds of men from Pakistan’s al-Qaeda heartland.”

Professor Jawed Siddiqi of Sheffield Hallam University noted, “If they were conned by a bogus college, they should be treated as victims.” He is one of 25 academics who urged university authorities to supply the students with material so that they could continue studies and sit for their exams despite being detained.

Between April 2004 and April 2008 more than 42,000 Pakistani nationals entered the United Kingdom on student visas.

Since 2007 Pakistani applicants have been vetted and subject to fingerprint tests and checks against criminal and counterterrorism databases. From autumn this year, universities will be obligated to check the names of all overseas students against a government database.

Conservative shadow home secretary Chris Grayling called on the government to “urgently step up” background checks. Former London mayor Kenneth Livingstone said terrorists “find a way around” any changes to the visa system. “We catch these people because of electronic surveillance and double agents and we aren’t going to pick one up easily at the border,” he said.

On July 17 two of the men, Janas Khan and Sultan Sher, were released from custody but face deportation if denied new visas to continue their studies.

More information can be found at www.j4nw10.org.

Pathfinder books sell at librarians’ conference



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

CHICAGO—Librarian stops by Pathfinder booth at 2009 American Libraries Association conference held here July 11–14. More than 6,000 exhibitors had displays in the exhibit hall.

Ninety-one participants, including many who work at public and college libraries, signed up to be contacted by a Pathfinder representative for more information on how to order Pathfinder books. Twenty-three Pathfinder titles were sold.

Pathfinder titles in Farsi received a lot of interest. One Iranian woman who stopped by the booth returned and bought all of the Farsi titles about women’s rights.

According to conference organizers, 41 percent of U.S. states reported declining state funding for public libraries in fiscal year 2009. The reduced funding comes at a time when library use nationwide has soared.

—ALYSON KENNEDY

Somali youth indicted in FBI investigation

Continued from front page

tion, but six more people are expected to be indicted.

Isse was arrested in February and has been held in detention since then. Under these conditions, he agreed to plead guilty to the charge of “providing material support to terrorists.” According to newspaper reports, he has admitted to training with al-Shabab for a week or two, receiving an AK-47 assault rifle, and helping to build a training center. The same reports say he is now cooperating with the investigators.

Under the Patriot Act, the charges against Ahmed and Isse carry very heavy penalties. The charge of giving support to terrorists carries a possible 10-year sentence. This charge has been the excuse for two sets of raids against Somali-owned businesses in Minneapolis—one in November 2001

and another earlier this year. In the case of the raids in 2001, the FBI later admitted they had no evidence.

Charges of “conspiracy” are frequently used by prosecutors when they have no evidence of a violation of law. Five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails for nearly 11 years were framed up on bogus charges of “conspiracy to commit espionage.” In October 1995 Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and nine other defendants were convicted of “seditious conspiracy” for the 1993 bombings of the World Trade Center in New York. Rahman was convicted of being the mastermind of the bombing. The government’s evidence consisted of a few phone calls.

National Public Radio described the indictments of Isse and Ahmed as “thin.” According to NPR, the three-page indictment does not mention re-

cruitment of young Somalis, nor does it mention al-Shabab, the organization to which they were allegedly recruited. “What the conspiracy was” Isse and Ahmed participated in “is also never spelled out,” the report said.

Isse had already left al-Shabab before the U.S. State Department designated the group as “terrorist.”

At the time the first of the Somali youth left Minneapolis to return to Somalia, their country had been illegally invaded and taken over by U.S.-backed Ethiopian troops. This was a move broadly opposed by Somalis in the United States as well as in Somalia. The East African country has not had a national central government since 1991. The authority of the current U.S.-backed government extends to parts of Mogadishu and parts of the south central area of the country only.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 10, 1984

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—July 25 has particular significance for the people of Puerto Rico. In 1898 on that date, U.S. troops invaded and occupied this Caribbean island nation.

Exactly 80 years later, in 1978 two young Puerto Rican independence fighters were ambushed, beaten, and summarily executed by 15 cops. These killings and the subsequent cover-up attempt by the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments have been a focal point for growing protests over the past six years.

Andrea González, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice-president, participated in two pro-independence actions on July 25, which marked these events, during her week-long visit here.



August 10, 1959

DETROIT—The cops are getting worse, more brutal, more lawless. In self-defense, the labor, Negro and socialist movements should pay a lot more attention to the job of curbing them.

In recent months Detroit cops have been caught raping a woman, choking and shooting at a girl who didn’t care for a cop’s advances, abusing and threatening people who wouldn’t buy police field-day tickets, and robbing banks and supermarkets. Almost the whole force staged a three-day slowdown in handing out traffic tickets as a protest against an order for white and Negro cops to drive together in some squad cars. These incidents were considered news-worthy, but they just scratch the surface.



August 11, 1934

The danger of the rapid growth of the fascist movement in America can be adduced from the startling testimony recently given to a Congressional committee investigating the activities of the Silver Shirts in the San Diego region of California. A direct link was established between the Nazi government of Berlin and purchases of arms by their American emulators for the purpose of training an American Storm Troop section.

Aping the German movement, the [Silver Shirts] Pelley organization has carried on a vehement campaign against all Communists, Socialists and Jews. They have demanded the dismissal of the “Jewish advisers” of President Roosevelt, Morgenthau and Barach.

New International no. 13

Our Politics Start with the World

by Jack Barnes

“Electrification is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop, and communist workers fight for it to be extended to all the world’s six billion people. . . . We are part of an international class that has no homeland. That’s not a slogan. That’s not a moral imperative. It is recognition of the class reality of economic, social, and political life in the imperialist epoch.”

—\$14—

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Lessons from FBI's secret war on political rights

Below is an excerpt from Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for August. The book provides an in-depth look at the covert and illegal FBI counterintelligence program, code-named Cointelpro, which was directed at socialists and other activists in the fight for Black rights and the anti-Vietnam War movement. Many of these documents were forced to light through a lawsuit filed by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in 1973 against the FBI for decades of spying, harassment, and disruption. The suit was settled 13 years later when a federal judge ruled in favor of the SWP and YSA. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

In late 1971 Donald Segretti was discharged from the army, where he had served as an attorney. He had a friend in the White House and he quickly landed a new job.

In the next few months strange things began to happen to some of the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination. During the New Hampshire primary the state's major newspaper printed a letter accusing



Judy White, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New York in 1966, speaking to crowd. FBI attempted to discredit her campaign telling media she was not old enough to run.

Edmund Muskie of making derogatory statements about French-Americans. Sometime later it would be discovered that the letter was a phony, but two weeks before election day it sparked quite a stir.

Later, there were fake press releases issued on the stationery of Muskie and Hubert Humphrey.

Then, on June 17, 1972, five men were discovered breaking into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. The story that eventually unraveled—including spying and political sabotage—had an unprecedented impact on American political life. It eventually forced the resignation of the president of the United States.

The Cointelpro documents reveal that none of the Watergate crimes were original. The FBI has for years been doing the same thing—and worse—to the Socialist Workers party. Every one of the plumbers' "dirty tricks" had been used for years by the FBI against the SWP, civil rights leaders, and others on the government's "enemies list."

As this country's political police, the FBI has been assigned the role of determining what ideas are fit for the American people to hear and what ideas are not. Socialism, in their opinion, is not fit.

The ruling class, which runs the

government, is convinced that it would be better for them if socialism were considered illegitimate or "subversive." The idea that the working people of this country should take over its wealth and resources and use them for their own welfare is a subversive idea—if you are a capitalist.

In the early 1960s the witch-hunt that had dominated American politics during the 1950s was giving way to a greater openness to radical ideas. Socialists began winning a place on the ballot—and were more and more being treated as legitimate candidates with a particular point of view. The FBI decided that they had a problem. Cointelpro was their solution.

The Cointelpro plot to disrupt socialist election campaigns was concocted not because of any illegal activities by the SWP, but because, as J. Edgar Hoover said, socialist candidates were "openly" talking to people about their ideas.

The documents at the end of this chapter show that the FBI attempted to wreck the 1961 campaign of a Black socialist for Manhattan borough president, waged a sustained drive against Clifton DeBerry, the SWP's 1964 presidential candidate, tried to get socialists excluded from supporting an independent Black candidate in San Francisco in 1964, and incited an attack on Fred Halstead when he was the

SWP presidential candidate in 1968.

These actions are only part of the record of FBI sabotage against socialist candidates. And there are operations that remain hidden in files the FBI is refusing to disclose.

One Cointelpro operation that has come to light through the socialists' suit concerns the 1966 campaign of Judy White for governor of New York. This was during the period when the antiwar movement was beginning to have a major impact on the thinking of the American people. White was a leader of the antiwar movement.

A broad layer of opponents of the war—including many radicals who were not particularly close to the SWP—had endorsed White as the only antiwar candidate in the race.

Campaign supporters worked hard to get the signatures necessary to obtain ballot status, which brought a significant amount of attention from the media.

The FBI looked for a way to sabotage this campaign. They noticed that according to New York law White was formally not old enough to hold the office of governor. The FBI tried to get this fact reported in the media in an attempt to discredit the campaign.

According to the documents, the FBI decided to rely on the *Daily News* to do the job for them, but the New York City CBS television affiliate did it instead. A copy of the transcript of the editorial broadcast by the station immediately following the election is reproduced in the files.

White recently read the Cointelpro papers relating to her campaign. "It was the CBS editorial that started the whole controversy that led to the passage of what was called the 'anti-Judy White law,'" she recalled.

As the documents show, the state legislature soon passed a law altering the election code to require that a candidate be old enough to assume an office in order to run for it.

"Even before the election, CBS was making effective use of the charge that I wasn't 'old enough.' I'm sure the FBI must have planted this idea," White said.

"We were getting many hours of broadcast time, which was uncommon then. But a few days before the elections it abruptly stopped."

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ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-2466. E-mail: cllondon@onetel.com

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August **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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by Nelson Blackstock
Describes the decades-long covert counterintelligence program directed against socialists and activists in the Black and anti-Vietnam War movements.
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by Leon Trotsky
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by V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky
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Latvia: workers confront gov't austerity measures

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

LATGALE, Latvia—Concerned about precipitating a social upheaval, Latvian prime minister Valdis Dombrovskis said July 22 that the government would not make further pension cuts, which the International Monetary Fund has demanded as a condition for a loan. The government already passed legislation June 16 cutting pensions by 10 percent.

"It is really bad that all workers are being pressured down. No worker can accept what is happening now," said Veronika Dzalbe, union president at the Nemo garment factory in Kráslava. "It is hard for me to see a future for myself and my children." Dzalbe was also worried about discrimination against the Latgale region, the most eastern province of Latvia.

This reporter and Vija Nikitina, a meat packer from Latgale now working in Stockholm, Sweden, spoke to workers in the region.

"We have circulated a petition to demand that the government withdraw this budget," Dzalbe said, showing us the lists with 231 signatures. The union in different plants around Latvia is circulating similar petitions, she said.

Outside the Dzirnaveks flour mill in the nearby city of Daugavpils, Nikolajs Docenko was working his last day on the job June 29 because of the new budget cuts and tax increases just adopted. His monthly wage of 200 lats was being reduced to 180 lats (1 lat = US\$2.03).

Because he is a pensioner and has continued to work, his taxes will go up dramatically. "It is like working for free!" he said. So he and other pensioners, including at the Nemo garment plant and the Antaris bakery in Daugavpils, are quitting their jobs.

Many plants in Latvia closed after the country became independent in 1991 and the Soviet Union dissolved. Instead of being able to sell all the products they could produce to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, they had to sell on the world market. The cheap energy was also cut off. In 1990 oil was bought on contract for \$1 per ton, but in 1992 Latvia had to pay \$110 per ton.

Before 1991, the meatpacking plant in Daugavpils, Daugavpils Galas Kombinats, employed between 1,500 and 2,000 workers. Today, there are 89 workers. "We used to slaughter



Veronika Dzalbe (right), union president at Nemo garment plant in Kráslava, Latvia, shows petitions with signatures from workers protesting recently adopted austerity plan.

10,000 chickens a day and 1,500 pigs," said Ivan Bajarín, one of the pensioners in Daugavpils. He had worked lifting meat in the freezer.

Several pensioners from that plant spoke to the *Militant* June 29, while waiting for their prescribed medicines to arrive at the small pharmacy there. Pensions range from 80 to 300 lats every month, they said. One woman said her pension of 119 lats will go down to 108. Heat and gas for her one bedroom flat is 65 lats a month and the rent is 30 lats.

Rising medical expenses

The state used to pay 75 percent in subsidies for their prescriptions, but now it is only 50 percent, said Alla Papirno. A visit to the family doctor is one lat, to a specialist, five lats if the family doctor sends you, and otherwise it is 12 lats. Hospital stays used to be free for five days, but now only three days are covered. Daily payments for longer stays are now 12 lats. They had been five lats.

Many workers said they are work-

ing short weeks. Olegs Nikitins, who works at the Knauf plant in Riga producing construction materials, only works four days a week. If there is a special order to fill, then the workers work every day until it is done.

Included in the government's budget proposal is another cut in wages for public employees of 20 percent. Vija Dzalbe, a teacher in the village Auleja, said her salary went down 20 percent in February and July, and will go down another 20 percent on September 1. At that time teachers will be earning the minimum wage, she said.

Vija Dzalbe did not expect much from the



Retired workers from meatpacking plant in Daugavpils talk to Vija Nikitina, left, and *Militant* reporter Catharina Tirsén, right.

U.S. Army to grow by 22,000 to meet war needs

BY BEN JOYCE

The Pentagon plans a "temporary" expansion of the U.S. Army by up to 22,000 active-duty troops over the next three years, U.S. secretary of defense Robert Gates announced July 20. This is the second increase since 2007. The expansion is "strongly backed" by President

Barack Obama, Gates said.

The announcement confirms the course Washington has been on to bolster its military capacity as it prepares for expanding imperialist war against expected growing resistance by workers to a deepening worldwide capitalist crisis.

The number of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan combined is approaching the level that it was at the height of the so-called surge in Iraq in 2007. There are currently 177,000 U.S. troops total in both countries. The Pentagon says its goal is to have 68,000 U.S. soldiers stationed in Afghanistan before the end of the year.

"The army faces a period where its ability to continue to deploy combat units at acceptable 'fill rates' is at risk," Gates said during a Pentagon news conference. "The persistent pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last several years has steadily increased the number of troops not available for deployment in the army."

The boost in the army's size will bring its total number to 569,000 troops from the current 547,000.

U.S. Navy admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

government, which she referred to as "the new constellation of 100 persons." She was describing the former leaders of the People's Front that organized the gigantic mobilizations from 1989 to 1991 in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia for independence.

The protests became an important part of the struggle by working people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union against national oppression and for democratic rights. In August 1991 Latvia and several other countries in the Soviet Union won their independence.

The Latvian organizers of the mass protests rapidly adapted to the capitalist powers that they turned to for support. Their party apparatus became financed by the oligarchs who became rich in the process of privatizing industry.

At the Nemo garment plant the present director, Igor Mensikovs, was also director when the plant was a state-owned factory in the Soviet Union. He became an owner of the plant by buying up the shares that all workers were given when the plant was privatized.

Dag Tirsén contributed to this article.

Recommended Reading

Europe and America

by Leon Trotsky

Writing in the mid-1920s, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explains the emergence of the United States as imperialism's dominant economic and financial power following World War I. Trotsky describes the sharpening conflicts between Washington and its European rivals and highlights the revolutionary openings for the working class that would be played out in the decades to come. —\$12



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Unique history of Chinese in Cuba: what

Presentation by Mary-Alice waters at New Zealand 'Rising Dragons'

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters at the Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas International Conference, held July 17–19 at the University of Auckland Business School in Auckland, New Zealand. The conference was cosponsored by the Auckland branch of the New Zealand Chinese Association and the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO). Some 70 people from New Zealand, across Asia, and elsewhere spoke or made presentations at the three-day gathering.

Waters is the editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, and the author or editor of numerous other books, including more than a dozen titles in the *Pathfinder Press* series, *The Cuban Revolution in World Politics*. She is president of *Pathfinder Press*.

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BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Ten years ago, in December 1999, a conference much like this one took place in Cuba. Sponsored by the University of Havana, the University of California at Berkeley, and the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, its focus was the Chinese diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The massive outflow of émigrés from China during the mid-nineteenth century—beginning in the 1830s and accelerating in the years following the 1842 defeat of the Qing dynasty by British colonial forces in what is, even to this day, generally known as the first Opium War—was part of the development of a truly world capitalist market.

Pushed by intolerable living conditions on the land and in the cities in China, and pulled by capitalism's unquenchable and ever-expanding need for labor power, many hundreds of thousands of Chinese peasants and workers left their native villages or large cities for the "new world." Some went voluntarily, others taken through deception or dragooned against their will. "Shanghaied" is a term known to English speakers the world over. Following

several centuries of what had been the even more lucrative African slave trade, the British-dominated "coolie trade" played no small role in the primitive accumulation of capital that fueled the industrial revolution.

This massive Chinese migration changed the course of history not only in Cuba but in other countries of the Western Hemisphere as well. Yet even the fact of that massive migration is so little known that I have never once spoken on this subject without someone in the audience commenting afterward: "I never had any idea there were Chinese-Cubans!"

The Chinese in Cuba

The focus of this presentation today is not the Chinese diaspora in general. There are many of you participating in this conference whose knowledge of that rich and complex history is far greater than mine. I will concentrate on one question: some of the *unique* elements of the history of the Chinese in Cuba and why these elements are important.

At the Havana conference I referred to, Wang Gungwu, the founding president of the International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas, posed a question to Brigadier General Moisés Sío Wong, president of the Cuba-China Friendship Association. Both of Sío Wong's parents were born in China. They came to Cuba from the village of Zengcheng, in Guangdong province. Wang asked Sío Wong:

"How is it possible that you, a descendant of Chinese, occupy a high government post, are a deputy in the National Assembly, and a general of the Armed Forces? How is that possible?" Your experience is so different from that of Chinese descendants elsewhere throughout the world.

And Sío Wong answered:

The answer doesn't lie in the degree of Chinese participation in the war of independence. That is worth studying, since nothing similar happened in any other country where Chinese indentured workers were taken. But here too, before the triumph of the revolution, we Chinese were discriminated against.



Bohemia

August 1960 march in Havana, Cuba, with symbolic burial of coffins representing U.S.-owned companies nationalized by revolutionary government. Socialist revolution in Cuba eliminated discrimination based on color and property relations that create inequality between rich and poor.

What's the difference in the experience of Chinese in Cuba and other countries of the diaspora? The difference is that here a socialist revolution took place. The revolution eliminated discrimination based on the color of a person's skin. Above all, it eliminated the property relations that create not only economic but also social inequality between rich and poor.

That's what made it possible for the son of Chinese immigrants to become a government representative, or anything else. Here discrimination—against blacks, against Chinese, against women, against the poor—was ended. Cubans of Chinese descent are integrated.

To historians and others who want to study the question, I say that you have to understand that the Chinese community here in Cuba is different from Peru, Brazil, Argentina, or Canada.

And that difference is the triumph of a socialist revolution.

Sío Wong tells this story in the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, based on interviews I did with Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Sío Wong between 2002 and 2005. All three, like dozens of other young Chinese-Cubans, most still in their teens, joined the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista more than fifty years ago. To this day Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong continue to carry heavy leadership responsibilities in Cuba.

That book was published in English and Spanish in 2005 by Pathfinder Press. And the Chinese-language edition was released last year. All three are available at the conference book table here.

Fighting to change the world today

If I start with Sío Wong's conclusion, it is to emphasize its immediacy and relevance to the struggles we are discussing at this conference, struggles against racist discrimination and exploitation *today*. It is to emphasize the importance of Sío Wong's answer for those of us who refuse to adapt to that world and, instead, fight to change it.

The fact that Cubans of Chinese ancestry are found everywhere in Cuba today, spread throughout all occupations and at all levels of leadership, is indeed unique, as Wang Gungwu noted. To cite but a few Cubans of Chinese descent who today hold positions of high responsibility, I would mention Lázaro Barredo, editor of *Granma*, the main daily newspaper in Cuba, and Esteban Lazo, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba. Both Nicolás Guillén, Cuba's national poet, and Cuba's most famous twentieth-century painter, Wifredo Lam, had Chinese forebears.

It can truthfully be said that in Cuba today there is no "glass ceiling" for Cubans of Chinese ancestry. They no longer live concentrated in Chinese barrios, nor are they restricted to a few economic livelihoods such as shopkeepers, fruit vendors, or laundry and restaurant workers. They are no longer excluded from universities and social clubs, nor oppressed and discriminated against in so many other ways—blatant and subtle—based on the color of their skin or shape of their eyes.

How has anti-Chinese racism, and the even more deeply rooted anti-Black racism, been rolled back by Cuba's working people? Why has Cuba's socialist revolution remained true to its proletarian course for more than fifty years? How has it set an example for the toilers of the world?

The answers to these burning questions are deeply rooted in a century of struggle against Spanish colonial and U.S. imperialist domination—battles totally intertwined with the struggle for the abolition not only of slavery but of bonded labor of every kind.



Chinese-Cuban fighter in the revolution. Not a single Chinese

For further reading

Our History Is Still Being Written:

The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

How Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—three young rebels of Chinese-Cuban ancestry—threw themselves into the great proletarian battle that defined their generation. They became combatants in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas. Each became a general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. —\$20

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

"To think that a socialist revolution in the U.S. is not possible, you would have to believe not only that the ruling families of the imperialist countries and their economic wizards have found a way to 'manage' capitalism. You would also have to close your eyes to the spreading imperialist wars, civil wars, and economic, financial, and social crises we are in the midst of." \$7

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at a socialist revolution makes possible

s, Soaring Bananas' international conference on Chinese diaspora

The lessons learned and the leadership forged in the process of those battles are at the center of the unique history of Chinese working people in Cuba.

Two little-noted facts

Many of the basic facts are well known to participants in this conference:

- The “coolie trade” that shipped more than 140,000 Chinese to Cuba between 1847 and 1874 as the Spanish and colonial sugar plantation owners sought alternatives to their dwindling supply of Black slaves shipped as cargo on the inhuman “middle passage” from Africa.
- The mutinies by Chinese toilers on board those vessels, where mortality rates on each crossing *averaged* 10 percent to 15 percent. Some were higher.
- The near-slave labor conditions of life and work imposed on the Chinese contract laborers, which led even the imperial Chinese government to send a commission in 1874 to investigate the treatment of its subjects in Cuba.
- The resistance and rebellions, the Chinese who survived as individual *cimarrones* in the forests and joined with other escaped slaves in their hidden mountain settlements called *palenques*.
- The size and commercial vitality of Havana's Chinatown, surpassed in the Americas in the nineteenth century only by San Francisco's.

I want to underscore two facts that are often little noted.

First, in proportion to the size of the population, mid-nineteenth century Chinese immigration to Cuba was greater than anywhere else in the Americas, including the United States. While virtually the same total numbers went to each country, the population of

Cuba was 1.4 million while the U.S. population was 38 million. Not surprisingly, on the streets of Havana and elsewhere, you will often hear it said that the Cuban people are one-third African, one-third Chinese, and one-third Spanish. The reasons are obvious.

Secondly, it is not accurate, as is often reputed, that the treaty between the governments of China and Spain ending the “coolie trade” in 1877 came in response to growing revulsion in bourgeois public opinion over the treatment of Chinese indentured laborers, as documented, among other places, by the Chinese imperial commission. The truth lies elsewhere.

With the outbreak of Cuba's first war for national independence from Spain

in 1868, thousands upon thousands of Chinese indentured laborers joined the liberation army, as did similar numbers of former slaves. No one knows how many Chinese fought in the liberation army because most had adopted Spanish names. But the records are full of references to Chinese units, some as large as 500. In face of this massive rebellion, the Spanish crown took steps it hoped would end a mortal threat to its continued rule.

As Sío Wong noted in his answer to Wang Gungwu, nowhere else in the world had Chinese indentured laborers in their vast majority joined in a national liberation war as they did in Cuba—a war that was at the very center of the forging of the Cuban nation.

The untarnished record of the Chinese in Cuba's independence struggle against Spain is captured in the famous words of Gen. Gonzalo de Quesada inscribed on a memorial to the Chinese *mambises* in Havana. “There was not a single Chinese-Cuban deserter. There was not a single Chinese-Cuban traitor.” Not one!

When Cuba's first war of independence ended without victory in 1878 and the infamous Pact of Zanjón was signed, the only meaningful concession

1. Juan Jiménez Pastrana, *Los chinos en las luchas por la liberación cubana* (1847–1930), (Havana: Institute of History, 1963), p. 82.

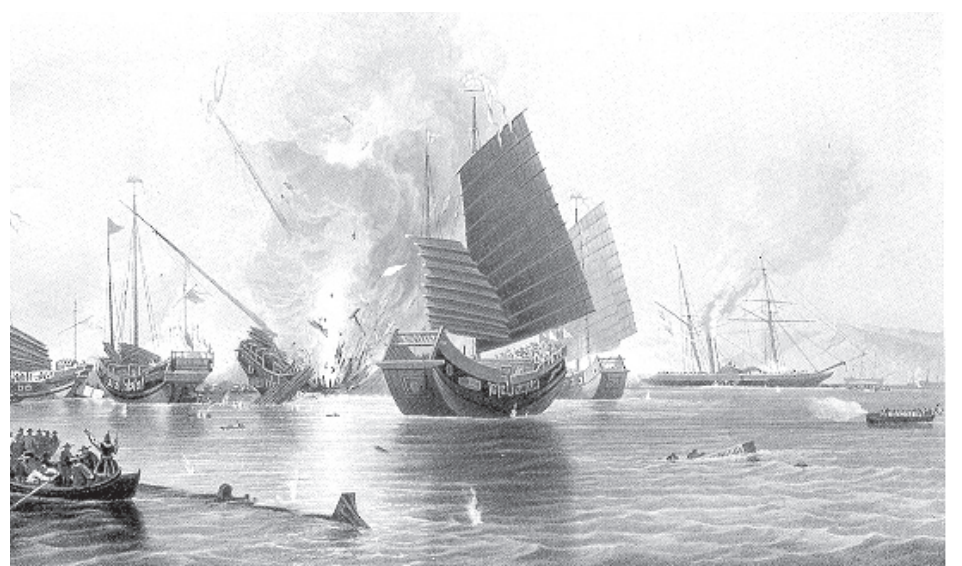
Legacy of Chinese struggles around world

Continued from front page

migration around the world. At a session entitled “Yellow Peril—Early Chinese in New Zealand,” two New Zealand historians described the racist violence and many forms of discrimination faced by the Chinese and other Asian immigrants here in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Dozens of participants attended talks at “break-out” sessions organized by ISSCO. These panels addressed topics as diverse as “Indian and Chinese Indentured Schemes in South Africa,” presented by Karen Harris of the University of Pretoria; “Chinese Immigrants and Local Interaction in Equatorial Guinea,” presented by Mario Esteban of the Autonomous University of Madrid; and “Corporate Interests and Environmental Racism in a Community Struggle for Immigrant Adult Education in San Francisco's Chinatown,” describing the recent success of a 30-year fight to get a Chinatown extension of San Francisco City College, presented by Ling-chi Wang of the University of California, Berkeley.

A talk on the “Unique History of Chinese in Cuba” by Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, was presented at another of the ISSCO panels. That same panel also discussed “Chinese in the Late 19th Century Colonial Cape [South Africa],” presented by Karen Harris, and “New Zealand History and the Chinese 18th Century Para-



Scene from 1839–42 war between British colonialists and Chinese Qing dynasty. Following war, hundreds of thousands of Chinese peasants and workers left China—some voluntarily, many against their will—for “new world.” Britain dominated the “coolie trade.”

that had been wrung from the Spanish crown was “freedom for the slaves and Asian contract laborers who are today in the ranks of the insurrectional forces.”¹

I think you would have to say that the Spanish rulers were simply recognizing reality. These were men and women who had conquered their freedom. They would never go back.

Washington snatches fruits of victory

When independence from Spain was finally won in 1898, after thirty years of struggle, the fruits of that victory were snatched by the rising imperialist colossus to the north. With Washington's protectorate came elements of the Jim Crow

system of anti-Black terror that reigned across the former Confederate states of the South in the wake of the defeat of post-Civil War Radical Reconstruction—as well as new codifications of anti-Chinese racism also imported from the United States.

On May 15, 1902, the U.S.-imposed governor of Cuba, Leonard Wood, signed Military Order No. 155, banning all Chinese immigration. Although the ban was briefly set aside from 1917 to 1922 in an attempt to increase sugar production in light of U.S. imperialism's needs during World War I, it remained in force, as did similar laws elsewhere

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digm,” presented by Lewis Mayo of the University of Melbourne. Waters's talk is printed in this issue.

Such ISSCO-organized sessions brought an added dimension to the gathering, which was the latest of the conferences initiated five years ago by the Chinese Association of New Zealand. With the exception of 2008, conferences have been held annually since 2005.

Three years prior to the first of these gatherings, New Zealand's then Labour Party prime minister Helen Clark had publicly apologized for the “poll tax” imposed by the 1881 Chinese Immigrants Act. That law required every Chinese immigrant entering New Zealand to pay a poll tax of 10 pounds. In 1896 the tax was raised to 100 pounds, a very large amount in 19th century New Zealand.

The tax was collected until 1934. It was not officially abolished for another decade, when the wartime alliance between China's Nationalist Party and the imperialist governments fighting Tokyo also led to the repeal of such anti-Chinese measures in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere.

The 2005 conference celebrated the prime minister's apology and expressed solidarity with a campaign in Canada for a government apology and



Winston Gee/Courtesy of Manying Ip

Libby Wong gives keynote address on “Overseas Chinese in a New Global World” at July 17–19 conference, which registered growing weight of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand and other imperialist countries.

compensation for a similar tax—there called a “head tax”—imposed between 1885 and 1923. In 2006 the Canadian government issued an apology and promised “symbolic” compensation.

At this year's conference, Manying Ip, a leader of the Chinese Association of New Zealand and Oceania Director of ISSCO, explained, “The xenophobia and anti-immigrant outcry of the 1990s awakened a sense of déjà vu among Chinese.”

She was referring to the response by right-wing forces to the increased immigration from Asia that followed the New Zealand government's introduction in 1991 of new entry criteria, designed to supply capitalists here with needed skilled labor. The subsequent influx of immigrants was dubbed an “Asian invasion” by the rightist New Zealand First Party led by former Na-

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in Cuba's war for independence, Chinese-Cuban deserted.

Chinese in Cuba

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in North America—and New Zealand and around the world—until the anti-Japanese World War II alliance with the Chiang Kai-shek government of China dictated a political change.

Chinese-Cubans: no separate history

Whatever the unique details, however, there is no separate history for Cubans of Chinese ancestry. Their stories are inseparable from the class struggle that has shaped Cuba today. And that is why the stories of Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong as told in *Our History Is Still Being Written* are so useful.

Each was born in the mid-1930s, growing up in a semicolonial capitalist Cuba disfigured by ever increasing U.S. economic domination, the venal corruption of bourgeois politics; spreading control of casinos, drugs, and prostitution by North American organized crime; and more. They were part of the generation that was attracted to and identified with the wave of victorious national liberation struggles that swept through Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean during and after World War II.

Most important, they were part of the generation that simply refused to bow down to the indignities and brutalities of life under the Batista dictatorship that came to power in 1952.

Born into families of shopkeepers in three different parts of Cuba, each came from a slightly different social strata of the Chinese-Cuban population. Chui, for example, whose father was Chinese and mother a Black Cuban working-class woman, was literally kidnapped from his mother and prevented by his father from even knowing of her—because of the anti-Black prejudices that prevailed within the Chinese community.

When all other means of struggle

were exhausted, each of the three took up arms, as did hundreds and eventually thousands and tens of thousands of their generation, including untold numbers of Chinese-Cubans. Choy pointed out to me that there were six Cubans of Chinese descent in the famous column led by Che Guevara that marched from the mountains of Oriente and led to the victory in the decisive battle of Santa Clara, central Cuba's largest city. In six years of revolutionary struggle in city and countryside, in which more than 20,000 died, the Batista dictatorship crumbled, its army and police force destroyed.

The men and women of the victorious revolutionary forces of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army—like Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong—did not initially set out to make a socialist revolution. They wanted a world with greater equality and social justice. They wanted to narrow the divide between the obscenely rich and the desperately poor.

As promised, the new revolutionary government organized Cuba's workers and farmers to carry out a land reform, provided loans and cheap credit to farmers, mobilized 100,000 students to wipe out illiteracy, nationalized housing and slashed rents, made discrimination in employment and public activities illegal, closed the casinos, opened the door to employment and greater equality for women, and led millions of unemployed Cubans in the building of homes, hospitals, schools, and other vitally needed public facilities.

As they took these elementary democratic steps—steps seen as immediate necessities by the toiling millions—working people in Cuba came into head-on confrontation not only with the country's small capitalist class, but more decisively with U.S. ruling-class families who owned the vast bulk of productive property in Cuba, and with the govern-



Members of New Democracy Alliance at Havana rally, Sept. 2, 1960. Banner says: "Resident Chinese support the Cuban Revolution and its leader Fidel Castro!"

ment of those families in Washington. At the time of the revolution, U.S. families or corporations controlled by them owned, or held on long-term leases, 90 percent of the cultivated land in Cuba; 90 percent of the mineral wealth; all of the oil resources and refineries—100 percent!; 80 percent of public utilities such as electricity and telephones; and more than 40 percent of sugar production.

As the confrontation unfolded, the working people of Cuba simply refused to back down to the demands of the U.S. rulers. They stood their ground in the face of sabotage, invasion, assassination, embargo, and blockade.

That, in short, is the origin of what became the first socialist revolution in the Americas. That, in short, remains to this day the reason for Washington's seemingly inexplicable determination to punish the people of Cuba, to make them pay for their insufferable affront to U.S. capital.

It's the reason five Cuban revolutionaries have spent nearly eleven years in U.S. prisons, held hostage to the refusal of the Cuban people to adopt "changes" Washington would deem acceptable.²

To end where we began.

In the United States today one often hears the assertion that there are no Chinese in Cuba any more, that they all fled the country to escape the revolution. The truth is far different, of course.

Class divisions before 1959

There were profound class divisions within the Chinese-Cuban population. Of the wealthiest layers of business owners, bankers, and professionals, many with ties to the Kuomintang (the Nationalist Party) in Taiwan, the large majority left Cuba for the United States during the first years of the revolution, as, of course, did most of their non-Chinese peers. Other capitalist property owners left following the nationalization of small commercial enterprises in 1968.

According to the official Cuban census figures, there were nearly 12,000 Chinese in Cuba in 1953. Some 6,000

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Legacy of Chinese struggles around world

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tional Party cabinet minister Winston Peters.

From the outset, these Chinese Association—organized gatherings in New Zealand have been known as the "Going Bananas" conferences. This year's event, for example, adopted the banner, "Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas."

The conference Web site explains that "Bananas" is historically "a pejorative term to describe Asian people born outside of Asia who have assumed Western cultural characteristics: yellow on the outside, white on the inside. Reclaimed in recent times, it has become a symbol that identifies those living outside of Asia who celebrate and embrace a blend of Eastern and Western cultures and influences."

The conferences have affirmed the Chinese-New Zealand community's identity in the face of discrimination and pressure to be invisible. Chinese Association president Kai Luey, for example, told the *New Zealand Herald* in April that the image people in New Zealand "have of the Chinese is not necessarily as good as we'd like it to be, and we're really hoping that this year's conference will help improve that or at least help better the understanding we have of China and the Chinese."

At the same time, conference organizers and speakers frequently refer to such discrimination as belonging mostly to the past and echo the nationalism of the capitalist rulers here, who seek to play up the country's "multicultural diversity" in order to cloak sharpening class inequalities and New Zealand imperialism's ongoing plunder of the fruits of labor of working people at home, throughout the Pacific and Asia, and beyond.

In the April *New Zealand Herald* article, for example, Luey emphasized that

the association speaks for those "born in New Zealand [whose] loyalty is to New Zealand" and that "we are primarily Western people, which is also why we call ourselves 'bananas'."

Closing the conference, Manying Ip noted that the conference this year was younger than previous events and involved a larger number of newer migrants from China.

This more recent influx from China and other parts of Asia is transforming society and the working class in New Zealand. In a keynote address to the conference, ISSCO president Leo Suryadinata, director of the Chinese Heritage Center in Singapore, noted that the proportion of new Chinese immigrants in the total New Zealand population has risen from just over 1 percent in 1990 to 3.6 percent in 2006.

This immigration is also being registered in other imperialist countries, as more Chinese move overseas to find work, with relatively fewer than in the past going to Southeast Asia—still by far the biggest home for emigrant Chinese.

Today some 10 percent of the population of New Zealand identify themselves as being from an Asian country, and in Auckland, the number is nearly double that. In 2006 some 22 percent of New Zealand residents were born overseas. From 1996 to 2004 China was the single biggest source of new immigrants.

More about the Cuban Revolution

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

The Cuban Revolution had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. As the proletarian-based struggle for Black rights was advancing in the U.S., the social transformation fought for and won by Cuban toilers set an example that socialist revolution is not only necessary—it can be made and defended. **\$10**



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Close all U.S. prison camps now!

Hundreds of prisoners at the detention center on the U.S.-run Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan have been conducting a strike since at least July 1 against their indefinite, arbitrary detention. They are refusing to leave their cells to shower, exercise, or communicate with family members. Working people should see this as a chance to demand the closing of Washington's prison camps around the world, which threaten workers' rights in the United States and internationally.

The administration of U.S. president Barack Obama has said it will close the infamous prison camp at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. In recent years that prison has come to be seen as a symbol for the brutal treatment and torture the U.S. rulers dish out to detainees worldwide—many of whom were simply swept up by the U.S. military, FBI, or CIA. The decision to close the Guantánamo prison reflects the political liability it has become for Washington.

Yet the Obama administration has insisted that prisoners from around the world being held at Bagram can be jailed indefinitely without charges and have no right to challenge their detention. The methods of torture the prisoners face are illustrated in the 2002 death of a man many U.S. intelligence officers admit was

innocent. He died after being beaten for several days.

While the White House so far talks about closing the prison at Guantánamo, the U.S. government is expanding the Bagram jail to hold more prisoners. The target of Washington's "war on terror" is not primarily suspect groups of "foreigners" or "terrorists." Washington's main target is working people *here* in the United States as they prepare to confront the growing resistance to the assault on our rights and standard of living. A section of the U.S. ruling class wants to put Guantánamo prisoners on trial in front of U.S. federal courts, laying the basis for more regular use of "terrorism" charges against working people through the "civilian" court system.

An increasing layer of working people in the United States can identify with those in Washington's prisons abroad as the number of workers behind bars within U.S. borders continues to grow.

The U.S. ruling class is trying to set a precedent with its detention practices as they prepare for the class battles they know will come with capitalism's economic and social crises. This is why working people everywhere should demand that Washington close its prison camps now and end arbitrary detentions!

Unique history of Chinese in Cuba

Continued from page 10

remained in 1970. The category of "Chinese" in Cuban census figures, however, includes only those born in China who retained their legal status as Chinese subjects. While the number of Chinese in Cuba who maintain Chinese citizenship has continued to decline steadily ever since, and is barely a few hundred today, that fact alone—a fact often misleadingly cited by opponents of the revolution—would lead one to hugely erroneous conclusions about the dynamic of the Cuban Revolution.

At the time of the revolution, far from fleeing the country, the vast majority of Cubans of Chinese ancestry were ordinary working people (the product of generations of intermarriage). Like Choy, Chui, and Sio Wong, they enthusiastically supported the revolution and organized to defend it, including within the Chinese community. The all-Chinese José Wong Revolutionary Militia Brigade, for example, was instrumental in taking leadership of the

Barrio Chino out of the hands of the Kuomintang supporters who had long dominated its leading societies such as the Chung Wah Casino. It formed part of the Revolutionary National Militia that defeated the U.S.-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

Today, pride of Cubans in their Chinese ancestry, along with interest in retaining and reviving their traditions, is expanding not disappearing, a fact registered by the increasing activity of Chinese associations across the island.

What measures did the Cuban Revolution take to eliminate discrimination based on the color of a person's skin?

"The greatest measure against discrimination was the revolution itself," Sio Wong answers.

Working people took political power and *used* it to advance that objective. It remains a work in progress, far from perfect and far from complete—the latest chapter in the unique history of the Chinese in Cuba. A history that is still being written.

Canadian nickel miners strike Vale Inco

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—After voting to reject Vale Inco's final offer, 3,300 nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, set up picket lines July 13 at the company's massive complex of mines and mills in the area. The workers are members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 6500. At the same time picket lines went up at Vale-Inco's refinery at Port Colborne on Lake Erie where members of USW Local 6200 have also taken strike action.

The workers are trying to push back major contract concessions demanded by the bosses who claim that "Sudbury is Vale's highest-cost operation and it's not sustainable."

The strikers' Web site, www.fairdealnow.ca, reports that Vale Inco's final offer demands takeaways from the workers' pensions, cost-of living allowance, and

the production bonus system. It also undermines job security through contracting out provisions along with "many other concessions." According to the strikers, last year Vale made \$13.2 billion in profits and currently has \$22 billion in cash assets.

In March Vale Inco announced plans to lay off 423 workers in Canada, including 261 in Sudbury, and imposed a June-July summer shutdown there, reported the *Globe and Mail*.

"The mood is pretty upbeat here," said picket captain Bob Ruff at the Clarabelle Mine Road near Sudbury. "We're ready to sit it out as long as we have to."

Workers at the company's Voisey's Bay operations in Labrador on Canada's east coast have also voted massively to reject the same final offer and are set to begin a strike on August 1.

Good info

Very good info—for everyone.
G.T.
Miami, Florida

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Threats on Iran

Continued from front page

consequences of Iran obtaining [nuclear] capability," Gates said.

The Obama administration has proposed to Tehran that it engage in negotiations over its nuclear program. At the news conference Gates demanded an answer from the Iranian government by late September, when the United Nations General Assembly convenes. "If the engagement process is not sufficient the U.S. is prepared to press for significant additional sanctions," he warned. The White House has also stated that military action is not ruled out.

"Israeli officials made clear they were unhappy with the administration's outreach to Tehran and that they wanted tougher measures," reported the *Wall Street Journal*. "In his appearance with Mr. Gates, Mr. Barak said any negotiations with Iran should be 'short in time and well-defined in objectives.'" Gates promised that Washington's proposal for talks with Tehran was not "an open-ended offer."

In Iran tens of thousands of young people were back on the streets of Tehran July 17. Their demonstrations to win more rights and political space have taken the form of supporting the campaign of Mir Hossein Mousavi, a former prime minister who ran for president in the June 12 election. His backers charged fraud when the government announced President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the election.

In the first large protest since some 20 protesters were killed in June by government forces, tens of thousands of Mousavi supporters turned out to hear Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president who backed Mousavi in the election, address the Friday prayer meeting. Attendance at the Friday prayer is usually dominated by government supporters.

In his speech Rafsanjani stated that Iran faces a "crisis" and that "it is necessary to regain people's consent and restore their trust in the regime." He called for releasing those imprisoned during the protests.

At one point the ceremony broke into rival chants, with Ahmadinejad supporters chanting "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!" while opponents chanted "Freedom!" and "Death to the dictator!"

Division in army

The London *Guardian* reported that 36 Iranian army officers were arrested for trying to attend the prayer meeting to show support for Mousavi. It cited a Farsi-language Web site, Peiknet, which reported that the officers had planned to attend the Friday prayer "in their military clothes as a sign of protest against the cruel massacre of the people by the basij [paramilitary militias] and revolutionary guards."

The next day Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the country's most powerful political figure, appointed a new head of the army's political ideology section.

Meanwhile, sharp divisions opened up among supporters of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. A week after Ahmadinejad appointed Esfandiar Rahim Mashaie as first vice president, he was forced to accept Mashaie's resignation. Stiff opposition to the appointment came from Ahmadinejad's own supporters, stemming from a comment Mashaie made in 2008 that Iran is "a friend of the Israeli people."

Khamenei sent Ahmadinejad a letter demanding he cancel Mashaie's appointment. Three members of the cabinet walked out of a meeting July 22 when the president refused to let Mashaie go. Hundreds of conservative students who generally back Ahmadinejad demonstrated against him in Tehran July 24. Mashaie resigned that same day.

On July 25 Ahmadinejad fired his intelligence minister, who had been among the critics of Mashie's appointment. The minister of culture, also an opponent of the appointment, resigned July 26.

For further reading

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